

Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area

FY 2010 Manager's Report



BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
NATIONAL LANDSCAPE CONSERVATION SYSTEM
October 1, 2009 thru September 30, 2010

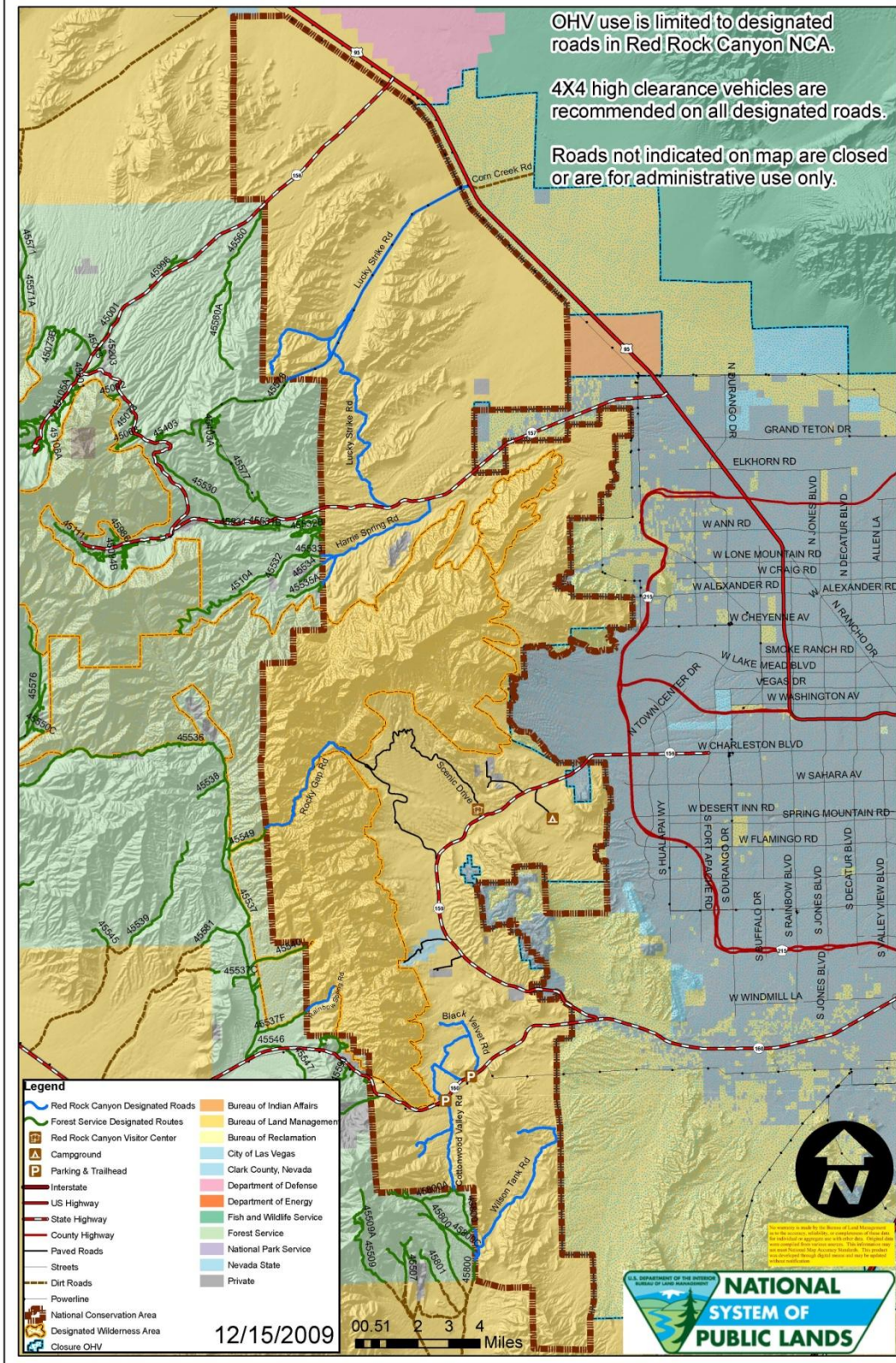
I: Introduction

- **Unit:** Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area
Red Rock/Sloan Field Office
Southern Nevada District Office
BLM Nevada State Office
- **Contact Information:** 4701 North Torrey Pines Drive
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www.blm.gov/nv/st/en/fo/lvfo/blm_programs/blm_special_areas/red_rock_nca.html

- **Manager:** Robbie McAboy
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- **Established:** Public Law 101-621, Public Law 105-26, November 16, 1990
- **Acreage:** 197,382 BLM acres
- **Annual visitation:** 1,066,562

Designated Roads in Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area



Red Rock Canyon NCA was designated to conserve, protect and enhance for the benefit and enjoyment of present and future generations the unique and nationally important geologic, archeological, ecological, cultural, scenic, scientific, wildlife, riparian, wilderness, endangered species and recreational resources.

II: Land Use Planning

The Record of Decision for the Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area Resource Management Plan was signed May 20, 2005. The five year evaluation and implementation review of the Red Rock RMP was completed in late May of 2010.

III: Protecting America's Natural Resources

Vegetation within Red Rock Canyon NCA is diverse and representative of the Mojave Desert ecosystem. Natural resources appear to be in good condition with the majority of the NCA being undisturbed. The primary factors affecting the condition of the natural resources continues to be impacts from unauthorized motorized use, illegal dumping and vandalism in areas immediately adjacent to the urban interface. Red brome infestations continue to grow and become more prevalent prompting proposed fuel reduction actions from the Fire Management Officer.



Lack of staffing has really hampered our efforts to conduct land health assessments and our ability to conduct resource inventories. The Natural Resource staff is shared with the Las Vegas and Pahrump Field Offices and we generally only utilize them for project specific work. Unlike at Sloan Canyon, strategies for vegetation restoration and management of biological resources have yet to be developed.

IV. Protecting America's Heritage Resources

Cultural resource inventories were conducted on approximately 5,000 acres of Red Rock this fiscal year. Efforts to complete a site condition assessment of the RRC NCA are currently underway and scheduled to be completed by 2012.

In addition to their responsibilities monitoring cultural sites, site stewards have also assisted with the reporting of impacts to other kinds of resources; e.g. natural resources, and health and safety issues, such as illegal dumping of hazardous waste materials on public lands administered by the BLM. SHPO is also a working partner under the site stewardship program, which is essential to tracking, reporting and analyzing general and specific trends on the RRC NCA. This program provides for the continued recruitment and retention of volunteers and assists with promoting responsible use of federal lands through on-the-ground education of the members of the public.

Graffiti is one of the most pervasive of the threats to both the scenic and cultural resources of the NCA. Tagging, carving, painting and other means of defacing prehistoric pictographs and geological features (as well as upon the built environment such as toilets and signs) continues to be reported by stewards and volunteer graffiti removal projects continue throughout the year.



V. Providing Recreation and Visitor Experiences

For fiscal year 2010, an estimated 1,033,562 people visited Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area. Majority of these visitors, 944,377, were counted utilizing the scenic drive. All of these visitors participated in activities such as camping, hiking, climbing, mountain biking, bicycling, sightseeing, bird watching, picnicking and visiting the newly redesign visitor center.

The new Red Rock visitor center complex was dedicated on April 10, 2010. The visitor arrival area is 11,260 square feet. The visitor center features an information desk, classroom and exhibit gallery, touch screen technology that provides information about the area and a projector with screen that routinely shows short videos of Red Rock.

The Discovery Plaza is an outdoor exhibit space nearly 23,000 square feet. It contains extensive interpretive exhibits based on four major themes; earth, wind, fire and water and their relation to the Mojave Desert. The discovery plaza has a desert tortoise exhibit and is home to eight female tortoises and one male tortoise, Mojave Max. An entire education program has been developed around Mojave Max and has continued to grow in popularity over the last few years.

Adjacent to the visitor center is an amphitheater that overlooks the Calico Hills that has seating for 287 visitors. First Lady, Michelle Obama utilized the amphitheater to unveil her Let's Move campaign.



First Lady and Panel
At Amphitheater



First Lady at Calico II

The visitor center was designed with many energy saving features in mind. A 60 kilowatt photovoltaic system generates a maximum of 20% of the power needed to run the visitor center complex. A transpired solar wall is used to heat the visitor center restrooms in the winter months.

The restrooms have water saving features that include waterless urinals, dual flush toilets and spring actuated lavatory faucets. A water harvesting system collects rain form the visitor center's roof that can be used for water features in the exterior exhibit area. Solar cells, timers and the uses of windows reduce the energy needs for the visitor center.

A total of 326,649 visitors entered the new visitor center between April and September 2010.



Photo/Exhibit Gallery



Visitor Receiving Area



Photovoltaic



Wind exhibit in exterior discovery plaza

State routes 156, 158, 159 and 160 go thru the NCA to other areas, mostly within the Spring Mountains National Recreation Area adjacent to the Red Rock. These state rights-of-way are currently maintained by the Nevada Department of Transportation and are in good condition.

The Red Rock Canyon Scenic Drive is a BLM National Scenic Backcountry Byway and traverses approximately 13 miles of the NCA with trailheads, scenic overlooks and picnic facilities along its route. This route is entirely under BLM management and is in moderate condition. It is in need of major repair in several locations where shoulders are non-existent and pavement is failing. The parking lots associated with the Scenic Drive are severely inadequate for the traffic volume, vehicle sizes and frequency of use. The scenic drive and its amenities were constructed when NCA visitation was around 20,000 people per year and now it is not common to see that type of use on a monthly basis.

The NCA has more than 100 miles of known trails of various standards for hikers, rock climbers, horse riders, and mountain bikers. Inventories are still being conducted and routes are being GPS'd. A determination still needs to be made on whether or not these routes will be incorporated into the trail system.

The NCA does not have a separate 5 year maintenance plan or backlog inventory. Maintenance has been a function shared with the District Office and this information has been collected for the entire District. While the District has been able to quickly respond to our maintenance requests, efforts are currently underway to hire a full time maintenance person to be stationed at Red Rock. With the sensitivities of the new operating system and exhibits at the visitor center, it has become necessary to have maintenance on-site.

We began updating the current sign plan for Red Rock this fiscal year. Funding was secured through SNPLMA to purchase portal signs and secondary signs. Efforts are underway to have the revised sign plan approved and these signs installed in fiscal year 2011.

Early this year, a business plan for Red Rock was approved. This plan primarily focused on the core area of Red Rock where amenity fees are collected to maintain or improve services and facilities to our visitors. This business plan addressed a fee increase for all those accessing the scenic drive. The approved fee structure is shown in the following table. We are anticipating collecting nearly \$1.9 million under this fee structure.

Type	Old Fee	New/Approved Fee	Change
Scenic Drive - Day Pass (car)	\$5	\$7	+ \$2
Scenic Drive - Day Pass (motorcycle)	\$2	\$3	+ \$1
Scenic Drive - Day Pass (bicycle)	\$0	\$3	+ \$3
Scenic Drive - Day Pass (pedestrian)	\$0	\$3	+ \$3
Scenic Drive - Day Pass Commercial Tour Bus (per person)	2	\$5	+ \$3
Scenic Drive – Annual Pass	\$20	\$30	+ \$10
Red Spring – Reserved Group Picnic Area with permit	\$0	\$40	+ \$40
Red Rock Overlook on State Route 159	\$0	\$0	No Change
Campground – Individual Site	\$10	\$15	+ \$5
Campground – Group Site	\$25	\$40	+ \$15

Fees collected go largely to the operation and maintenance of the visitor center, administration building and maintaining facilities along the scenic drive, providing law enforcement and a number of planning efforts to improve or provide new facilities along the scenic drive where the public has informed us there is a need.

VI. Your Recovery Dollars At work

Red Rock Canyon did not receive any ARRA funding.

VII. Engaging Youth in America's Great Outdoors

A total of 123 youths donated 431 hours of work on various volunteer projects at Red Rock. In addition to youth volunteers, there are several programs hosted yearly to engage Southern Nevada's youth in outdoor activities. These efforts are detailed in the Environmental Education section below.



VIII. Partnership and Volunteer Efforts

We continue to have a great working relationship with both the Red Rock Canyon Interpretative Association and the Friends of Red Rock Canyon.

The Red Rock Canyon Interpretive Association continues to operate Elements, a book and gift shop in the visitor center, provide Interpretive Naturalists who conduct educational programs, hikes and other on and off-site interpretive activities on behalf of the NCA in concert with the BLM environmental education staff. In 2010, RRCIA presented 881 interpretative programs to 14,801 participants.

Friends of Red Rock Canyon continues to be the main provider of thousands of hours of volunteer labor and help with projects such as clean up events and work days and trail building and graffiti removal activities. FORRC along with BLM had a total of 29,777 hours of volunteer labor in 2010. This equates to a total of \$620,850.45 of labor donated to the BLM.

IX. Science

Many of the environmental education programs that are given each year incorporate science and scientific inquiry into the presentation. The new exhibits in the Discovery Plaza of the visitor center are geared to make the visitor more aware of the natural sciences.

X. Outreach, Environmental Education, and Interpretation Efforts

Red rock Canyon offers lessons taught in classroom and outdoor settings. All lessons use scientific inquiry approach and meet Nevada State Department of Education Standards. Ranger led programs include K-1 through grade 5. Through activities and hand-on learning, students explore the natural and cultural wonders of the Mojave Desert. Students use multisensory activities to learn about animals, plants the geology of the desert.

In 2010, BLM educators presented 48 environmental education programs reaching 1,935 students. Certified teachers led 74 teacher lead trail programs reaching 4,055 students. One teacher workshop was presented to 20 teachers.

Interpretative messages include information on NLCS, stewardship, resource conservation, safety, responsible recreational use, cultural and natural features of the conservation area, and the agency's and public's role in the conservation of our resources in Red Rock Canyon. In 2010, BLM presented 302 interpretative programs to 10,422 participants (these statistics include the environmental education programs).

XI. Manager's Corner

A lot of exciting things happened at Red Rock this year. The opening of our new visitor center complex, completing the business plan and increasing our fees, having our entire field office located in one building, and the most exciting was have First Lady, Michelle Obama visit us.

We still have a few key positions vacant that we are working to fill and are hopeful we will have the capacity in the next fiscal year to be more responsive to our public, provide better services and make some much needed facility improvements.

Things have really started to shift towards a better direction at Red Rock. Employee morale is high and the staff is really invested in doing a good job and providing services with the customer (visitor) in mind.